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A human warfare carol

OC OC

Tyrlyn the Great Conqueror sat in his command chair on the bridge of the 'Righteous Conquest', the flagship of his armada. He turned towards his helmsman and asked: "How long until we reach our target?"

The asked officer replied: "About 12 terk, Sir!"

"Good, enough for a good nights rest. I'll be in my quarters, notify me one terk before arrival!" Without waiting for an answer, Tyrlyn stood up, turned around and went into his room, where he laid down in his bed in order to sleep.

Nearly as soon as he fell asleep, Tyrlyn was woken up by some kind of rattling noise, like that of old metal chains. And when he opened his eyes, he nearly fell out of his bed from the shock. Before his bed stood a figure clad in a finely crafted and highly decorated military uniform, which would have given the mysterious person an awe inspiring aura, were it not for the heavy chains that bound its arms, legs and torso. Upon looking closer, Tyllyn recognized the person: "High Lord Ttext? Is that you? But it can't... You are..."

"Dead?", came the amused answer, "Yes i am. And unless you change your ways, you will be soon as well."

Tyrlyn couldn't shake his confusion: "But whats up with the..."

"The chains? Those are punishment for my sins. And before you ask why I don't live in paradise for all those 'rightful and just' conquests I've lead, well, it turns out they weren't that rightful and just after all. But deep down you already know that don't you. Just like I knew as well."

"But the Right of Conquest is the holiest of..." Tyrlyn tried to justify, but was quickly interrupted by the chained individual:

"Oh, spare me that ramblings of our High Priests. You're slaughtering primitives, because they can't fight back. There's no honor in that, and you know that perfectly well. But I'm not here to change your mind, I will only give you a message, after that I'll leave you to yourself."

"Tonight you will be visited by three entities that will show you what was, what is and what will be. Learn your lesson or your punishment will be far more severe than mine." With these words the being vanished. And after a few minutes of wondering what that was about, Tyrlyn fell asleep again.

The ghost of human warfare past

Tyrlyn awoke again, this time to what sounded like a battle cry. When he opened his eyes a figure stood before his bed again, but this time it wasn't High Lord Trext. It wasn't even a being of the same race, but an alien from a race Tyrlyn has never seen before.

It was clad in what looked like some ancient armor, made of leather and some polished golden metal, maybe brass or more likely bronze. The long wooden stick with a sharpened metal tip was obviously a weapon and what looked like a hilt on his belt suggested he had a sword as well.

"What are you" Tyrlin managed to stammer out.

The figure responded with a strong but not overly loud voice: "I am the ghost of human warfare past. I am here to show you what forged those you want to fight against"

Tyrlyn again struggled to rid himself of his confusion: "Human?"

"Yes, of course you don't know them by that name. They are the inhabitants of planet Earth, or as you call it S-117."

"The next target... So go on and show me!"

The ghost let out an amused sigh: "Look around."

In that moment Tyrlyn realized that the whole time his bed wasn't in his room anymore, but stood in a wide open field. Around him dozens of what seemed to be the same species as his unwanted visitor. But instead of being clad in ancient armor, their bodies were covered by raw, untreated animal hides. And instead of spear and sword these were armed with stones and simple slings.

Those primitives seemed to be two distinct groups, which, like prompted by an unknown signal, suddenly began running towards one another. And where they met, they started to fight with a ferocity barely seen even in the wildest of animals.

Before Tyrlyn could make any comment, the ghost waved with his arm and the scene changed. The wide open fields were replaced by a narrow path between mountains, and the few dozen fighters by hundreds of humans who wore a similar armor to the ghost itself, standing shoulder to shoulder, shield in hand, blocking said path. Opposing them was an army several thousands strong, yet the few hundred showed no fear.

As the fight went on it became clear that while the smaller force was better trained, the sheer numbers would eventually defeat them, but they fought on nonetheless. For days they fought without tiring or giving up the defense, only being defeated after a

traitor lead the enemy through a hidden path allowing the small force to be outflanked.

Again the ghost waved his hand, and Tyrlyn was in his room again. He turned towards his visitor and said: "I understand what you're trying to show me. Those humans of yours are very ferocious and determined people, which makes them great warriors, but still they can't possibly have a chance when fighting my armada which is millions strong."

As he uttered those words, the ghost vanished. So Tyrlyn went back to sleep, confident in his capabilities and that of the force under his command.

The ghost of human warfare present

This time Tyrlyn awoke to a large explosion rumbling in the distance, and before him stood a figure that seemed to be of the same species as the previous one, only this time instead of leather and metal armor it wore a whole outfit with a strange irregular green-brown pattern including a vest that likely contained some kind of armor plate. In its hands it carried a strange contraption made of wood and steel, shorter than the spear of the previous ghost. It had some resemblance to the laser rifles his troops wore, but without power packs, so maybe a slug thrower?

This time Tyrlyn could think clearer: "So you're gonna show me how the humans fight now, right?"

"I am the ghost of human warfare present, and well, what I'll show you happened a few decades ago, but considering the scales of time that should count as present."

Again Tyrlyn looked around and all he could see was wasteland. As far as he could see there was no green hills, no colorful flowers, only mud and dead trees. In the distance he could see big artillery canons throwing huge shells across the waste land into some kind of defensive trenches, and exploding in enormous fireballs, killing dozens every second.

But after a few minutes the shells stopped exploding. Instead they released a thick yellow smoke, that caused horrible injuries to everyone it touched. Nobody could survive that, so Tyrlyn prepared for another scene change, but it didn't come.

Instead there was a sudden, loud and very high pitched sound from the side of the artillery guns. And as soon as it ended there was an uncountable flood of humans spilling out of those trenches, towards the one that Tyrlyn has just seen being ridded of all life.

But it wasn't because as soon as the flood started, it was met with heavy repeating fire from the 'dead' trench. Dozens of guns, each firing multiple shots per second, each shot killing another attacker. And yet the flood of soldiers rolled on like it didn't even notice.

When the flood reached the other trench the remaining defenders weren't just killed, they were drowned in bullets and blades. Tyrlyn was a hardened warrior, but even he couldn't watch as it played out, so he looked away.

When he turned back, the waste land was gone replaced by another, less destroyed, wasteland that suddenly dropped off at a cliff. It was clearly the aftermath of an intense battle, one army driven back below the cliff, while the other one held a part of the land above. In between laid hundreds if not thousands of dead and dying.

And there crawling through the mud was one soldier dressed similarly to the ghost next to him. But he was missing the gun, and on one piece of equipment there was a white circle with a red cross. At first it looked like he was dragging himself towards the cliff edge, to likely safety, but instead he stopped at one of the wounded, quickly dressed his wounds and then dragged him towards the edge and slowly roped him down towards his own people.

Then instead of following down, the unarmed soldier turned back towards the battlefield and started crawling. If he was to be spotted by a single enemy soldier, it would likely be the end of him, and yet he returned again and again, saving one life after the other, until Tyrlyn lost count, and quite a bit after that.

Only when the soldier couldn't find anyone alive anymore, and when he has grown so weak that he could barely carry himself, only then did he allow himself to end his search and return to his fellow soldiers.

Another wave from the ghost and Tyrlyn returned to his room, where he faced his visitor and told him: "The ruthlessness of those humans as well as the number of them that are willing to fight is impressive and their compassion and comradery is commendable. But their technology is so far behind, they could never be a true threat to my armada or our people."

Again the ghost vanished and Tyrlyn laid down to sleep, this time with far less confidence in his superiority.

The ghost of human warfare yet to come

He awoke again, Tyrlyn could only see the back of the figure before him. Considering the size and rough shape, it was likely another human-like ghost, though most of the details were hidden by a tattered cloak, which was so black it seemed to drain the entire surroundings of all light.

"Let me guess, your the ghost that shows me what will be?"

Instead of answering, the visitor just turned around and looked at Tyrlyn, which immediately backed away from the sight. Instead of the alien, yet recognizable face of the ghosts that came before, this one was made only of bones. And while it had only dark,

seemingly bottomless pits where the eyes should be, it fixed Tyrlyn in a stare so intense, that even the highly trained warrior simply froze in horror.

When the ghost looked elsewhere and Tyrlyn was again able to look around, he stood on a mountain top, looking down at a vast area of land, there were other mountains, rolling hills, forests and a beautiful ocean. And above all in the sky hung his armada.

It was an awe inspiring scene, which made him understand the true reason why many primitives surrendered immediately after first contact, not that surrendering prevented their inevitable slaughter.

The humans however didn't bow in respect or cowered in fear, they mobilized. Millions of people calmly made their way to the next military base, airfields prepared their fighter jets, civilians kept on with their lives as if nothing happened. If Tyrlyn didn't know it any better he would assume it was just a training exercise.

As soon as the first landing pods were fired towards earth, the jets rose up to meet them and escort them to the ground, where most of them were met with a heavily armed, but relaxed group of soldiers. They stood there, hands deliberately not on their weapons, making it clear they were not interested in a fight, but able to defend themselves if one broke out.

Then a single shot of a laser gun was fired and all hell broke loose. The troops already on the ground were mowed down by the human infantry opposing them. The fighter jets shot down the landing pods they escorted and the pods without escorts were hit by anti air missiles launched from previously hidden positions.

Tyrlyn was shocked: "How could they have such effective weaponry, they aren't even really space faring." The ghost next to him remained silent. Tyrlyn tried to calm himself down: "Anyway we'll just send the heavy drop ships. The humans needed multiple rockets to take down a single pod, so they can't hope to damage one of the heavy ones."

As if on cue new, bigger vessels were launched from the armada. They were met by another rocket barrage, which -as predicted- didn't cause any major damage. That was until an ominous siren rang out in a hidden underground base, followed shortly after by a rocket rising up out of the ground. It was bigger and slower than the previous ones, and when it hit one of the ships, the entire surrounding area was bathed in an incredibly bright light, even blinding Tyrlyn who stood miles away.

When he regained his sight a few seconds later, there was little left of the drop ship. In its place there rose a cloud up into the sky, a very distinctive cloud, that could only mean one thing: "NUKES?!? Those damned primitives have nukes?!? And... and they... they are willing to use them in... in their own atmosphere?!?"

He looked up to the black figure next to him, but it didn't answer, it only waved its hand, and the world before them changed. They still stood on the same mountain top, but now below them was only waste land. The war obviously has raged on for some

time, maybe a few month. The soldiers of the armada kept attacking, and the humans kept defending, but something was strange.

The humans were using armada weapons. Not all of them, many still wielding slug throwers, but others held laser rifles or plasma casters. The humans even captured some of the heavy ion artillery, no not captured, they look different: "They build their own! In a matter of month?!? How..."

Tyrlyn was interrupted by a low rumbling noise. A few hundred meters before him a craft rose up into the sky. It was obviously human made, but it was lifted by an grav-drive just like the armada drop ships used. As it rose to the sky it went faster and faster until it hit the armada flag ship and Tyrlyn watched as in the blink of an eye the pride of his armada was turned into a debris cloud, which in an unfortunate chain reaction crippled or destroyed the rest of his once great invasion force.

Tyrlyn stared in disbelief, his mighty armada destroyed by primitives. He looked up to his unwanted companion, which once again remained silent and waved his hand.

They now stood on a different mountain, below them was a beautiful piece of land but something was wrong: "The plants... They are blue.. Are we.... Oh no, the homeworld!" The ghost beside him didn't say a word, he just slowly nodded.

And in the next moment it rained fire from the sky. It came from ships similar to the one from before, only bigger, and it devastated everything below. Tyrlyn turned towards the ghost: "But it doesn't have to be like that, right? I can still avert this disaster, can't I? Pleas answer me! I... I need to maken this right... Can I???"

But the black figure just vanished, and Tyrlyn found himself back in his bed where he quickly fell unconscious.

The next morning

Tyrlyn awoke to the piercing sound of his com pad. His helmsman informed him of the upcoming arrival at the target. "So maybe it is not yet too late! No, it was just a bad dream!" He quickly washed himself, put on his best dress uniform and walked onto the bridge.

The officer manning the communications terminal advised him: "Sir, I'm picking up a transmission from the target species, or humans as they call themselves, they are asking us to state our intentions."

"Humans? So it **was** true... Good, open a channel and tell them we are coming in peace"

The officer was slightly confused: "Sir, it is our mission to...Oh, an act of deception, I see..."

Tyrlyn responded in a stern voice that left no room for arguments: "No, I do in fact intend to come in peace, for I fear a war with humanity is one we cannot win and one that will cost us everything. I am aware that is not our mission and I will carry the responsibility when we come home again. But until then you are my subordinates, bound to follow my orders, and i will not doom our race!"

"I... Understood, Sir. I... I will send the message and inform the crew."